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Committee Meeting Held to Negotiate TEACH Grant Program

By Carina Zaragoza

A rulemaking committee has begun negotiations to sort out the details of the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program. The committee will hold multiple sessions, the first of which began on January 8 and ended on January 10. The schedule calls for two more sessions. The second session will run from January 22 to January 24, and the third session will be held from February 6 to February 8.

Part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, the TEACH Grant Program provides grants of up to \$4,000 a year to students who plan to become teachers. TEACH also provides current teachers with grant aid should they pursue graduate degrees. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 set aside \$325 million over the next five years to fund the program.

The TEACH Grant Program was largely overlooked in the media due to the various other provisions of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, namely the subsidy cuts to Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) lenders, the reallocation of funds to the Federal Pell Grant Program, and cuts in interest rates on federal student loans over several years. The goal of the TEACH Grant Program is to promote and support students entering the teaching profession.

Among the various requirements of the program, grant recipients must teach at a high-need school and teach a high-need subject. In addition, grant recipients must teach for a total of at least four years. Applicants must meet other program requirements, such as minimum GPA and standardized test scores.

While the program was created to encourage students to enter the teaching profession and financially support them in this endeavor, some of the program requirements have not been well received. Criticism of TEACH centers on the stipulation that if recipients do not fulfill the requirements of the program, the grants are converted to unsubsidized loans subject to interest charges. Many question this apparently punitive provision.

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The negotiating committee is discussing and considering various topics and details about the TEACH Grant Program, including:

- Institutional Eligibility
- Program Eligibility
- Conversion of Grant to Loan
- Repayment

Upon the conclusion of all sessions, the committee will make recommendations to the Education Department on how to implement the program. TEACH is scheduled to begin in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Source

Inside Higher Ed

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/01/09/teach

Higher Education Washington, Inc.

www.hewi.net

TEACH Grant Program

studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/TEACH.jsp